

MERCATOR:

O R,

Commerce Retrieved.

From Saturday, January 9. to Tuesday, January 12. 1713.

The intolerable Insolence and Falshood of the Party Exposed, who are now come to that highth as to affirm, that We lose by our Trade to Spain.

A Challenge to them to prove it.

Another Letter from Backstroke, with a Quotation from the Inspector-General.

THE Assurance with which the Party, that Oppose the *MERCATOR*, manage their Debate, is come to such a highth now, that it is really remarkable, and very singular. The *MERCATOR* thinks, he needs do little more to Expose them to the World, than to let the People know, what it is they say. Among several other extravagant Things, which they have had the Face to publish, the *MERCATOR* desires these Three may be noticed for the present, and may serve for a Sample or Taste of the whole.

1. I ASSERT, says their Author, *We have a losing Trade with Spain, by taking off more of their Commodities, than they take off of ours.* This is dated Decemb. 7. 1713.
2. Knowing, that they should be answer'd by instancing the great Sums we receive in Hard Ware, as our Merchants call it, i. e. in Bullion, by every Ship from Spain; they have the Face to anticipate us in that, and trump up a new Fancy of their own, (viz.) That Silver is but a meer Merchandize, which because we want to Export again to the Indies, we buy at Cadiz, as we do other Goods at other Places, because that is the Market for it, and we cannot esteem it a Return for our Trade, but that we pay for it by Remittances, or by Bills on other Countries.
3. That whereas one of the Queens Ships brought over a very great Quantity of Pieces of Eight lately, near a Million as we are inform'd, and that he expects this would be argued against them, they say the Captain of the English Man of War took this Money in for Holland for the sake of a Half per Cent. which the Dutch pay more for the Freight than the English, but not being permitted to go to Holland with it, as indeed was not likely he should, delivered it here, &c.

Of all the forged Stories, that ever have been put upon the Town by this Party of Men (*their SCHEME Excepted*) none was ever seen so ill put together as these are.

They are such coarse, gross, naked, uncloth'd LYES, (the *MERCATOR* hopes he may be excus'd, that hateful Word in so detestable an Attempt as this is) they are, I say, such barefac'd Forgeries, that it is hoped, no Men of common Sense can be deceived by them. The Design is in it self abominable, and the Confidence, with which it is managed, is such, as no Age in History can give an Example of the like: It is an Attempt to arm and prejudice the People of Great-Britain against

the only Trade in the World, that is the Fond of their Wealth and Prosperity; THE Trade, that has always enrich'd us, and which is to us an inexhaustible Mine of Treasure, which nothing can prevent from doing us Good, but such an abhor'd villainous Plot as this, bent against the Nation's general Good.

Are these the Patriots of our Trade? the Retrievers of our Commerce? *Lose by our Trade to Spain!* Was ever such a thing heard in England before? *Lose by our Trade to Spain!* We may be said as truly and as reasonably to lose by our Woollen Manufacture.

But how do we lose by it? Let us ask them that Question. Why truly they speak plain, By taking off more of their Commodities, than they take off of ours.

Now it is true there is one way to bring them off of this horrid Assertion; but it is a Sophism, a Shuffle so scandalous, that nothing but such a Mountebank-Merchant as we have to do with can be concern'd in, (viz.) That Bullion or Silver is a Merchandize or Commodity, which we buy in Spain, as we do the other Growth of their Country; and it is most certainly true, that we take more of their Commodities, reckoning Silver for one, than they take of ours; how else should we gain by their Trade? So we take more Commodities off at Guinea, than they take of ours, for we take Elephants Teeth, and Gold-Dust, and Negroes, in a great Quantity, for Beads and Baubles, Couries and Bangle-Bracelets: In like manner, We take more of their Commodities off from the Spaniards, than they take from us; for, besides their Wine, Oyl, Fruit, Wooll, Iron, &c. we take off a prodigious Mass of Silver, insomuch that notwithstanding the vast Exportation of Bullion to Holland and India, the Rate of Bullion here is now below the Standard, and great Quantities are Coining every day at the Mint. As to the Sham-Reason he gives for our sending so much Bullion to Holland, the Dates of Time will expose it for a Falshood; but of that hereafter.

But to make short Work with these Men, for the *MERCATOR*'s Business is to Expose them, but not to Scold and Rail with them; they have ASSERTED, as before, that *We have a losing Trade with Spain, &c.* and take more off of their Commodities, than they take off of ours.

They who Assert ought to prove. The *MERCATOR* gives them a fair Challenge: If they can prove this, all they have said already in other Cases, however absurd, however false, however wickedly design'd and grossly forged, shall be taken for Truth; the *MERCATOR* will acknowledge himself worsted and overcome, lay down the Cudgels, own himself a Novice, turn Pupil to them, and never appear in the Cause again.

Nay,



Nay, the *MERCATOR* offers them farther; The Parliament is at hand, let the Case be laid on both sides fairly before the Parliament; if they prove, *That we are Losers by the Trade to Spain*, they shall pronounce any Sentence they please upon the *MERCATOR* of what sort they think fit, even of Felony, on Condition to bear the same, if they cannot prove it; and the *MERCATOR* will join in a Petition to have it pass'd into a Law, that the Person failing shall be the Criminal.

Let them then go to work, for the Proof lies upon them. Their Authors were cautioned early to say nothing, but what they could prove: They were told, this was not an Age to be taken upon Trust in: And when they first set out, they promised they would prove every thing they said. Now let them bring out their Scheme of the Spanish Trade, and lay it before us, and abating the Sophism aforesaid of reckoning Silver among the Commodities, let them make it appear, if they can, that *we take more Goods off of the Spaniards, than they take off of us*: This is the Task they have undertaken, no doubt but they will make it good; the Eyes of the Town are upon them: They have engaged in two such things, as no Man ever undertook before them, (viz.) To justify their old forged SCHEME, and to prove, that *we lose by our Trade to Spain*. Let their hired Attorney make good these two, *Et erit mihi magnus Apollo*.

But before the *MERCATOR* leaves them, knowing how the Necessity of their Cause, as well as their own Inclination, will put them upon Shuffling out of this Broil, as well as they can; *The Terms must be explained*; and we must determine, what we are to understand by the word MORE, *more of their Commodities*.

It is not MORE in Quantity, MORE in Number or in Bulk, that is not the Dispute among us, but MORE in Value. The Ballance of Trade in all Cases depends upon the Value of the Goods exchanged, and this Value is to be Estimated upon the Prime Cost, including the Freight, &c. of the Goods sent from either respective Nation.

In this manner our Trade to Spain is to be Estimated; and the *MERCATOR* verily believes, tho' he does not assert, *as they do*, but he believes, and it is not altogether improbable, that the very Freight of the British Shipping Employed in our Trade to Spain, including the Fish we catch and carry thither, is equal to all the Goods and Commodities we bring from thence.

This is indeed but a Conjecture, and is offered only as such; but theirs is a positive Assertion, and the proof lies upon them. Let us see, how they will make it out, and the *MERCATOR* will give his Reasons for the Conjecture above mentioned, afterward.

In the mean time it falls out very ominously, and for the Mortification of these bold Adventurers, that the very Day, on which they had the matchless Confidence to publish such an Assertion, the Custom-house Books present us with such an Account of Goods Exported to Spain and the Streights, as is enough to Confound them, and make them ashamed of what they have said, and which, when published, will stand as a Specimen, by which something may be seen of what our Trade to Spain is, which these Men pretend is to our Loss.

But before we come to that, the *MERCATOR* observes the same Inconvenience lies on us as in the French Trade, (viz.) About Goods Entred under the General Head *the Streights*. Now we all know, that as the French have sundry Ports in the Streights, (viz.) *Marseilles*, *Toulon*, and some other small Ports on the Coast of *Languedoc* and *Provence*, and the Italians have *Genoa*, *Leghorn*, *Naples*, *Messina* and *Venice* (for we may call them all Italy) so the Spaniards have *Gibraltar*, *Alicant*, *Denia*, *Xevia*, *Mallaga*, *Carthage*, *Barcelona*, &c. to all which we have a constant and great Trade; and as sometimes Goods are Entred to all these Ports by

their Names, so many times the Words *THE STREIGHTS* take in the Goods shipped for all these Places.

Wherefore to end or avoid a Cavil in that Case, the *MERCATOR* makes a fair Proposal to them, (viz.) That we should allow, that all the Goods shipped to the Streights in general, which indeed is no where, and may be any where, be Estimated to go One third to Spain, One third to France, and One third to Italy; or if not so, let them say what Proportion is rational to each place, and the *MERCATOR* for Peace sake will acquiesce, let it be as they please. Now the Account of Goods Exported from the Custom-house to Spain and the Streights in One Day, (viz.) Jan. 7. the very Day they made this monstrous Assertion, will a little help to open the Eyes of those poor ignorant People, that these Men endeavour thus to Delude and Impose upon. But as we have not Room for it in this Paper, it must be Referr'd to the next *MERCATOR*.

To the Mercator.

Being not willing to crowd you too much, and fill up all your Papers with my Answers to the insolent Attacks of the Club, which I have to do with, I shall only repeat, for your particular Observation, a few Words of the *Inspector-General's* Report, which were quoted in my last Letter but one, that my Friend *Martin* may see, what his own Evidence (for I must insist upon it, that the *Inspector-General* is an Evidence of his own calling up) has prophetically spoken so long ago of him and his Club, and of what they would say and do about the French Commerce. *The Words are these*:

" This Ballance against us of a Million yearly, which has been asserted in several Books, and in Memorials laid before the King and Council, and both Houses of Parliament, must have been Chimerical, for By-ends advanced by some, and ignorantly followed by others.

NOTE, The Author found it was not so unlikely a thing, that the Parliaments should be imposed upon, as some would now pretend it to be. But he goes on.

" But in case of a Peace, whenever it shall happen, 'tis easie to be foreseen this Dispute will always last. They, who may desire the Continuation of the War, there's our Club, or whose Dealings to other Countries may lead them to obstruct all sorts of Traffick with France, there's our *METHUENITES* or *Portugal* Traders, What will they do? They will affirm such an Over-balance; there's *HARRY* brought in directly: they will (hire an Attorney, ignorant in Trade, and strong in Face, to assert whatever they bid him, and) affirm such an Over-balance; observe, they right or wrong will affirm it. But let the *Inspector* go on; They who understand Trade in general, and who know there can be no sound Peace between Countries, when there is not a fair Commercial Treaty, there's the *MERCATOR*; Well! What of them? Why, they will deny it; And what follows? indeed what is exactly come to pass, from whence future Animosities and Breaches may arise. Vide Report, *Inspector-General*, Part I. Pag. 26, 27.

" Could any thing be more prophetic, or more exactly foretell the Conduct of my Friend *Martin* and his Club. I believe they can scarce give me an Instance of the like in a Hundred Years time, and for this Reason I troubled you with the Repetition of it. I think it is a *Backstroke* to them, which they will never ward off.

Your Humble Servant, B.

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